

# Waterbury Public Schools News Update

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March 2008

## Special points of interest:

- Cambridge Report on district progress and performance released
- Crosby Bulldogs win state championship
- New district web site is revealed!
- New phone messaging system studied

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## Cambridge Report Released

### PRESENTATION TO WATERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Given by David L. Snead

Student test scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Aptitude Performance Test have been progressing incrementally upwards, though this improvement is not necessarily reflected in the list of schools making Adequate Yearly Progress. The district continues to narrow the achievement gap between white and minority students. Average daily attendance is edging upward, and the rate of suspensions has dipped.

Best Practices Modeled - The district continues to utilize the Curriculum on the Wall and to regularly review and update its curriculum. Authentic assessments are used to analyze student progress. Data driven decision making has been adopted throughout the district and now

guides instructional decisions. Schools utilize specialized literacy and numeracy teachers to augment classroom teaching, along with block-scheduling, common planning times, and positive behavior support strategies. Successes at one school are shared among staff at other schools during monthly Administrators Meetings – i.e., Principals present new concepts and strategies that have worked at their schools and other Principals are encouraged to visit and adapt these strategies at their schools.

The school-within-a-school concept continues to work well within the three comprehensive high schools. These three high schools are also furthering this strategy through Smaller Learning Communities. Middle schools have adopted a similar concept through the use of vertical houses, enabling students to continue in the same "house" throughout their middle school

career.

The Special Education department utilizes a number of strategies to provide special education students with the best possible learning experience. Inclusion models are used very successfully in the pre-kindergarten setting, and other strategies include co-teaching and Least Restrictive Environment, Early Intervention, and alternative teaching methods.

The bilingual education department continues to provide excellent instruction to students whose native language is not English through bilingual education and English as a Second Language instruction. Students currently speak 34 languages from more than 70 different countries.

No Child Left Behind - In the past several years, the district has offered choice and supplemental educational services to students in schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

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## Crosby Bulldogs Win State Championship

Crosby's Bulldogs won the State LL Championship Basketball game in style Saturday, March 15, 2008, beating Trinity Catholic 82-79. It was the school's third state championship in boys basketball, the second against rival Trinity Catholic.

The game was played in

style at U Conn's Gampel Pavilion on the Storrs campus and broadcast live on Channel 3 (WFSB-TV). Anthony Ireland earned the MVP award with 24 points, including a 6 out of 6 foul shot record. Other major players included Lavar Moore, who scored 26

Cro  
Cro  
Cro



points, and BJ Monteiro, who scored 18 points but fouled out of the game with about three minutes to play.

Crosby previously won state championships in boys basketball in 2005 and 1998.

**Appellate  
Court Rules  
on Cases  
Heard at  
Wilby High  
School  
November 28,  
2007**

## Ruling on Murphy vs Lord Thompson Manor Appeal

When Maureen Murphy began planning her wedding several years ago, she decided she wanted to hold her ceremony at the Lord Thompson Manor and gave the business a \$2,000 deposit to hold her date. What happened next was a mixed exchange of communication that ended up with the bride-to-be in tears, the wedding switched to another location, and a lawsuit filed against Lord Thompson Manor.

The plaintiff alleged that the defendant had given away her wedding date reservation to another couple despite the fact that she had signed a contract for the date and provided a deposit, while the defendant claimed he could not find a signed contract and did not receive back a confirming email when he requested it.

That lawsuit resulted in a \$15,000 compensatory damages award to the plaintiff,

which the defendant appealed. That appeal from the defendant was heard this past November at Wilby High School. As Waterbury high school students watched.

In the end, the Appellate Court sided with the plaintiff, Maureen Murphy, ruling in late January that the compensatory damage award was not excessive and that the original court did not abuse its discretion in making the award.

## Ruling on Sokaitis vs Bakaysa

The case of Theresa Sokaitis versus Rose Bakaysa was a case of sister versus sister. In April of 1995, the two sisters, Theresa and Rose, agreed to share equally any winnings either of them might receive from various sources such as slot machines, cards, at Foxwoods casino and lottery tickets. According to the case, on June 20, 2005, a brother, Joseph F. Troy, Sr., presented a winning Powerball lottery ticket for payment to the Con-

necticut lottery officials. He said the ticket he was presenting was owned jointly with Rose. The lottery officials split the winnings between the brother and sister, awarding each half of the \$500,000 winnings, less federal tax withholding. As a result, on August 19, 2005, Theresa filed suit against Rose, claiming she was owed her half of Rose's winnings as per the 1995 agreement plus interest. Rose claimed the original agreement was unen-

forceable under State Statute 52-553 which voids any agreements or contracts regarding gambling. Theresa countered that this was not a contract on gambling but an agreement to share profits from legalized games, something that did not exist when the statute was written. Rose asked for and received a summary judgment in the case. Theresa then appealed.

That appeal was heard before the students at Wilby High

School in November.

In its January ruling, the Appellate Court reversed the original court judgment, saying the statute did not apply because the case was not about "money ... won ... at any game." The Court returned the case to lower courts for further proceedings.

There was a single dissent in the case, with Judge Lavery writing that he would affirm the judgment of the trial court."

## Background on Appellate Court Trip To Wilby High Schools

The Connecticut Appellate Court traveled to Wilby High School in Waterbury on Wednesday, November 28, 2007, to hear arguments in two cases. The court's appearance at Wilby is part of an ongoing educational initiative of the Connecticut Judicial Branch to introduce students, educators, and the general public to the role and responsibilities of the court system.

This program began over 20 years ago and this visit marked the fifth time that the judges have held arguments at a high school. Prior to the oral arguments, members of the

Waterbury Bar Association met with the students to discuss the court system and provide an overview of the cases to be argued.

Appellate Court Chief Judge Joseph P. Flynn said: "Judge William Lavery, Judge Thomas West, and I are very pleased to sit at Wilby because Waterbury is one of our most important judicial centers, and I believe this will give the students greater understanding of our legal process."

Waterbury Superintendent of Schools David L. Snead, Ph.D. commented: "This is a wonderful chance for students here in

Waterbury to see what really goes on in a courtroom. We have a number of talented, highly gifted students who might be considering a career in law, and this will give them an opportunity to see what it takes to succeed on a higher level. They may have watched courtroom dramas on television, but this will show them the reality of an appellate court proceeding. This is the type of opportunity that could truly motivate our students to strive for a career in the law."

Wilby Principal Robyn Apicella said, "Our students will get a better understanding

of what it might be like to be a lawyer or a judge, and the importance of the appellate process. We especially welcome the opportunity to share this with students in other Waterbury high schools. Even though we have to limit the number of students who will be allowed to participate, we felt it was important to provide this experience for students throughout Waterbury."

The visit was arranged with the help of Waterbury Public Schools Attorney Maurice Mosley, also President of the Waterbury Granville Academy.

## New District Web Site Unveiled

WATERBURY - The Waterbury Public Schools recently launched a new district web site, featuring new links, more information, and greater ease of use. Visitors to the site will be greeted by a dynamic front page which will be updated regularly with news from around the district and with a new district activities calendar.

New features on the site include a Parents Page as well as a School / Community Relations page. Visitors may check the Parents Page for links to bus schedules, school lunch menus, helpful online resources and more. The School / Community Relations page will provide visitors with the current week's Channel 16 broadcast schedule as well as ways parents or community members may provide additional assistance to help students achieve, including volunteer opportunities within the schools.

The main district web page continues to include links to Progress Book, human resources and job information, and the Board of Education meeting schedules and agendas. There is also a Staff Page with information for staff, and a link to further district information and statistics under the Office of Superintendent.

The individual school web sites are also new and easily accessed via the schools link from the district home page. Parents are cautioned that previous web addresses for schools may have changed as a result of the change-over to the new site, and they should bookmark the new web address if they are frequent visitors. The main district web page remains [www.waterbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.waterbury.k12.ct.us). In addition, the district has expanded its information sites to include web pages for Curriculum and Instruction, Special

Services, Bilingual Education and more.

Additional information will be added in the coming months, including more curriculum information, standardized student test results as they become available, and more staff and parent information. The district is considering a "Student Page" and welcomes suggestions for items that may be included there.

The district is inviting feedback to the site via a "Contact Us" page, and it will be posting and checking a web survey instrument in the coming weeks as the district completes its work in transferring and updating information from the old district web site. Those seeking additional information or wishing to make suggestions may contact Nancy Vaughan, School / Community Relations Coordinator at [nvaughan@waterbury.k12.ct.us](mailto:nvaughan@waterbury.k12.ct.us)

**Catch up on all the news from around the district by checking the Waterbury Public Schools new web site**

## TRU TV To Debut Show on Schools

TRU TV, formerly known as Court TV, is changing its format to include other "true" TV concepts. One of the most recently announced shows is one centered around schools. Titled *The Principal's office*, the series tries to depict a day in the life of a principal.

Each episode will feature several principals throughout the country, as they go about their daily encounters with students and parents.

The show will try to include the perspective of the principal and will attempt to show the

school's point of view while also interviewing students and parents. Viewers might expect to see principals and assistant principals as they deal with "guiding and disciplining" students through a typical work day.

The show is scheduled to debut this summer.



**Barnard School students participate in Cub Scout pack 01 held a special morning breakfast award ceremony recently. Many of the students received certificates.**



## Cambridge Report Continued

Although the Choice program has been somewhat limited by the number of available seats in schools making AYP, the supplemental educational services program has proven to be more popular among parents.

Improvement Plans Linked to District Goals - Waterbury's mission, vision and goals are well communicated throughout the district and are part of both the district and individual school improvement plans.

Most schools now display district / school goals in a prominent location near the front entrance where students, staff and parents pass each day.

The Waterbury Public School district envisions a world in which urban children can compete and succeed in the new millennium. This vision will become a reality by creating a world that is free of drugs, violence and crime. Every child should be provided the opportunity to be raised in a loving environment, where people respect and support one another. The world we create must allow for diverse opinions that are freely expressed. Support and direction from local, state and national policies will help people to achieve their goals and their aspirations and to better their quality of life. Our community must be self-sufficient and self-reliant to successfully meet the global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our community must be interdependent and value cooperative partnerships for sharing resources. People must be able to live, work and attend school in a clean, safe and healthy environment. People must also be empowered to achieve their greatest potential. Our expectations must represent the highest standards in the areas of ethics, behavior, academic achievement, technology, and interpersonal relationships. Family

units must be supportive of each other, assume responsibility and be actively involved in the creation of a better society.

The mission of the Waterbury School System is to establish itself as the leader in Connecticut for urban education reform in partnership with the State Department of Education and the entire Waterbury community. The school system will provide opportunities for all students to maximize their skills and talents in an atmosphere where teaching and learning flourish under the never-wavering belief that all students can be exemplary students, while becoming respectful, responsible, productive citizens vital to our community.

Our District Goals are -

1. The Waterbury Public Schools will attain high academic achievement for all students in literacy.
2. The Waterbury Public Schools will attain high academic achievement for all students in numeracy.
3. The Waterbury Public Schools will provide a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. The Waterbury Public Schools will ensure that all parents are actively engaged in the educational process.

Priorities / Needs / Barriers

Previously Identified - The district's highest priority is to meet the needs of a diverse student population. The highest priority for Title I funds is to provide direct services to as many students as possible. Barriers to reducing the achievement gap remain: the transient nature of the student population, the lack of entry-level skills of students entering kindergarten, the challenge of obtaining appropriate funding,

and the conflicts faced by young parents in trying to meet the needs of their children.

Facilities / Budget - The district continues to invest in its schools. It recently graduated its first senior class at the Waterbury Arts Magnet School, and it is in the middle of constructing additions to its three comprehensive high schools. It also is in the process of constructing three new elementary schools.

Technology - The district recently debuted a new web site which is designed to be more user-friendly and to provide parents and the community with more information online than was previously available. It is also in the process of contracting with a new phone messaging service that will enable the district and schools to more easily send telephone and email alerts and announcements to parents.

Staff - Using Data Driven Decision Making, Central Office now offers professional development opportunities that are designed to provide the skills and strategies needed at each school. Efficient use of instructional time is strongly encouraged.

Board of Education - the Waterbury Board of Education continues to monitor student achievement through reports from Central Office. Both principals and subject supervisors appear before the Board periodically to discuss issues and review progress. The Board has been very supportive in adopting and implementing innovative new programs which could lead to improved student achievement. It has lobbied for support from the community and supported requests for adequate funding.

You have before you the key findings of the Cambridge Report. The report was quite positive overall. There are a number of things that the district is doing well. Some key points I would

**Improvement  
linked to  
District Goals**

## Cambridge Report continued

like to stress:

- The superintendent and his assistants have managed the district well through a period of intense financial restriction and are supported well by other district staff. Morale is improving. There is a unified approach to leadership.
- The district has a clear vision and a growing culture of open dialogue. .
- There are good signs of growth in achievement in key areas of the curriculum.
- The curriculum is developing in a coherent and structured manner.
- Financial management is secure and there is effective teamwork and collaboration with maintenance teams. There is increased vision and good use of grants to supplement tight budgets.
- Inclusion of students with disabilities into regular education classes is working well in the younger age classes and there are good arrangements for early identification to provide help to students before they start in kindergarten.

There is strong involvement of a wide range of community and voluntary organizations in the development of young people in the district.

Areas identified as in need of further improvement include: further improving the achievement of students, providing even more training for staff, and using district assessments when setting improvement targets for schools and the district overall.

Improving and unifying the district's systems for storing and distributing to schools the data on student achievement

Making better and more effective use of stakeholders' views when

considering new initiatives and evaluating those already implemented

Reducing further the numbers of student suspensions, particularly among subgroups

Continuing to improve the education of students with disabilities AND

Reviewing all aspects of the current joint arrangements with the city for appointment of teaching and supervisory vice principals, paraprofessionals and school office staff

We are addressing these issues through our DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

We are in the process of finalizing its District Improvement Plan. A draft plan has been completed by a committee representing staff, administrators, the Board of Education, and parents. It is in your packets and will be reviewed tonight.

I've already discussed our District Goals, so I will not repeat them, however, it is important to realize that these goals truly drive our instruction.

Tier One Indicators in our new plan are:

To increase reading proficiency for all students by a minimum of 15% by the end of three years as measured by Developmental Reading Assessment, Connecticut Mastery Test, and Connecticut Aptitude Performance Test.

To increase mathematics proficiency for all students by a minimum of 15% by the end of three years as measured by Developmental Reading As-

essment, Connecticut Mastery Test, and Connecticut Aptitude Performance Test.

To reduce the number of school suspensions by 15% over three years as measured by district suspension data.

To reduce truancy by 15% over three years as measured by district attendance data.

To increase the involvement of families in the educational process by 15% over three years as measured by strategic district surveys and participation in school and district meetings, workshops, and events..

Our Tier Two Indicators (or New Strategies and Interventions) include:

[Create and implement a district-wide professional learning community system to improve the achievement of all students in core subject areas, particularly in literacy and numeracy by:](#)

- Acquiring a data warehousing system to meet the needs of data storage and recovery

- Providing professional development and implementation support for all staff in the Professional Learning Community
- Providing continued professional development and implementation support for all staff in Common Formative Assessments
- Providing continued professional development

## District Improvement Plan Detailed

## Cambridge Report Conitnued

### Data Driven Decision Making Remains a Key to Improvements

and implementation support for all staff in Data

Driven Decision

Making.

- Providing continued professional development and implementation support for all staff in Positive Behavior Support
- Creating and implementing a Waterbury model for walk-through observations including the use of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
- Aligning the use of Connecticut Accountability Learning Initiative services to identified schools with the needs of the District Improvement Plan

- Providing dedicated

time weekly for all staff to address the needs of students based on student data and current educational research for the purposes of collaborative planning and instructional

decision making.

- Providing job-embedded professional development to all schools using literacy, numeracy, and

English as a Second

Language facilitators and coaches to ensure the implementation of research-

based effective teaching

strategies.

Provide additional prescriptive instructional support systems to address the needs of students identified as below proficient in literacy by

- Creating district guidelines for after-school and summer school programs

- Improving and implementing intervention strategies offered during the

school day in K-12

- Improving and implementing summer programs for students at all levels, particularly in transitional years (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>)

Implement a continuum of positive intervention strategies to address student behaviors by.

- Establishing in-school suspension programs in every elementary school per the district model and re-structuring existing programs at the middle and high school level

- Continuing to utilize the Juvenile Review Board as an intervention to reduce expulsions and court referrals

- Increasing the

availability of alternative education sites for grades 5-12

- Improving school climate through Positive Behavior Support teams at the school and district level

- Offering after-school and Saturday morning detention programs for all schools to modify student behaviors

- Improving the auto-

mated message system for parental notification of absenteeism

- Improving the use of Support Service Personnel to implement research-based programs

Improve meaningful family partnerships with the school by improving two-way communication among students, schools and families based on research strategies and data gathered

from strategic family surveys by:

- Ensuring all communications and forms will be easily accessible and translated into Albanian and Spanish with available support to families that speak other languages

- Implementing a district Family / School Partnership survey that will be used to establish pre and post data

- Restructuring each

school governance board to include key stakeholders

- Providing district parent curriculum workshops three times each year by division (north, east west) and level (elementary, middle and high)

- Implementing Family

Involvement Policy and Family / School Compact annually

- Extending the hours

per week for the parent liaisons and high school parent staff

Investigate and design the restructuring of schools to address the academic needs of all students by:

- Investigating and designing a Pilot Literacy Academy

- Creating a middle school block schedule for reading / language arts

- Investigating and designing alternatives to increase instructional time in mathematics by a minimum of 45 minutes per week

- Re-structuring numeracy and literacy classes to improve services to non-proficient students

- Investigating ways to change the schedule as a whole to increase instructional time

Fill all vacant positions with

## Cambridge Report Continued

highly qualified teachers as early as possible and retain only those who demonstrate superior performance.

- We have developed specific guidelines to help speed up the process of identifying teacher vacancies as early as possible. We are also hoping to create a New Teacher Academy if funding can be found and to restructure the teacher mentor system to include a one-to-one mentor and a cohort of new teachers with a senior advisor.

The STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION provides ASSISTANCE to us through the use of such strategies as:

- Leadership teams
  - Demonstration schools
  - Coach only schools
  - CALI Training activities provided through SERC, ACES, and Education Connection
  - Report rollouts
  - Development of district accountability systems
- English as a Second Language and special education

The following DISTRICT CHALLENGES /- POLICY ISSUES have EMERGED Adequate funding is always a challenge, especially as the economy continues to remain in turmoil and prices of such fixed items as utilities continues to rise. It is especially difficult to obtain funding for after-school and other programs that have proven effective but were originally funded through competitive grants that have since run out. Funding may also be an issue in years to come as three new K-8 schools come on line. The classroom space is needed; now the community must commit to properly staff these schools. Also, some of the items we have placed in our District Improvement Plan may be contingent on funding.

Student transience will remain a problem, as it does in many urban school districts. Students who remain in a given school throughout the grade levels tend to do well, and students who remain in Waterbury schools throughout their career graduate well prepared; however, students often come in from other school districts - especially those out-

side the state - less adequately prepared.

The city is attempting to address the needs of pre-schoolers. Recently, community and school leaders have worked on an Early Childhood Blueprint that promises to focus efforts to improve the lives of these youngsters in such a way that they will arrive in school better prepared to succeed.

### HOW CAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION / STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ASSIST?

It is hoped the State Department of Education will continue to provide quality assistance and training opportunities and that the State Board of Education will assist when policy changes are needed within the legislature.

***“Student transience will remain a problem...”***

## Frank J. Lombardo, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Announced

The family of Frank J. Lombardo, Sr. will award a scholarship established in his memory to a graduate of Kennedy High School. The scholarship was created by the Lombardo family as a way to honor his commitment to the education of the children of Waterbury.

Frank J. Lombardo, Sr., was an educator in the City of Waterbury for over 35 years. Mr. Lombardo spent the majority of his teaching career at Kennedy High School. During his time there he was the chairperson of the English Department, and was the business manager of the Athletic

Department. He also served for a period of time as acting vice principal. After retiring from Kennedy High School in 1997, Mr. Lombardo returned several months later to serve as acting assistant superintendent of the Waterbury School Department. His most recent position was as the mayor's liaison to education, business and community. In that capacity, Mr. Lombardo worked internally and externally to resolve conflicts and create a positive and productive learning environment for children in the City of Waterbury.

Mr. Lombardo was dedicated to his family, education and the love of his community. The recipient of this scholarship must demonstrate good scholarship and achievement and active participation in both school and the community.

Applications are available in the guidance office at Kennedy High School. They are due May 1, 2008.

Donations to the scholarship fund can be directed to the Frank J. Lombardo, Sr. Memorial Scholarship Fund c/o Waterbury Teacher's Federal Credit Union, 773 Straits Turnpike, Middlebury 06762.

**WATERBURY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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[www.waterbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.waterbury.k12.ct.us)**

## **New Phone Messaging System Studied**

Following the winter storm that caused major delays in busses getting students home, school officials have begun studying the possibility of switching to a new phone messaging system that would replace the Phone Master system. While Phone Master was a good system when it was first implemented, newer and better technology is now available.

The district will be looking for

a system that makes more calls per minute, possibly an internet based one.

Of course, the major downfall of any phone messaging system will be its ability to report back wrong telephone numbers and the ease with which those numbers can be updated and changed within the system.

School officials will also look

for ease of use in creating new messages. It is hoped that the new system will be useable for more than just emergencies. Other districts around the country use automated phone message systems to send out information on all kinds of school events and activities.

The district hopes to make the change before the end of this school year.

### **REMINDER –**

**CHECK OUT THE NEW DISTRICT WEB SITE FOR UP TO THE  
MINUTE NEWS AND INFORMATION!**